

# Planning Newsletter

## Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge Summer 2002

### Comprehensive Conservation Planning

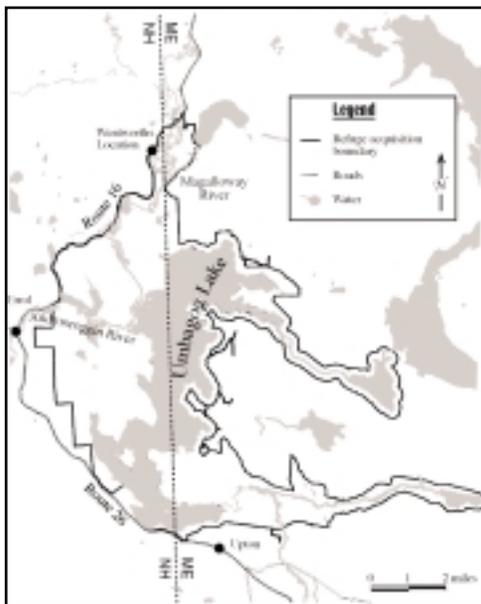
The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is starting work on a comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) for the Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge. The plan will include an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) covering our proposed management strategies for the next 15 years.

This planning project provides a unique opportunity for the Service to involve individuals and local communities in the long-term management of the refuge. You can play a significant role in the development of this far-reaching plan!



Black-throated blue warbler. *Steve Maslowski/USFWS*

### Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge



### Who will be involved in developing the plan?

The local refuge staff in Errol, New Hampshire will lead the effort, with assistance from the Service's Northeast Regional Office. We will invite other Service experts, as well as representatives from the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and the tribal nations, to serve on our core planning team.

We hope that you, and other interested groups and individuals, will involve yourselves in this plan by helping us evaluate current management, envision desired future conditions on the refuge, plan the future of our public use programs, and get a feel for other important issues. We hope to engage local residents and community leaders in discussing ways the refuge could become a welcome and integral part of the community.

If you are interested in helping us plan Lake Umbagog refuge's future, we encourage you to participate! Please let us know how we can reach you with further details by completing the mailing information on the back of this newsletter.

### What should I know about Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge?

Located in Coos County, New Hampshire and Oxford County, Maine, Lake Umbagog refuge is a northern treasure in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The diversity of exceptional habitats provides excellent breeding and foraging areas for migratory birds, endangered and threatened species,

Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge  
PO Box 240, Errol, NH 03579  
(603) 482-3415  
email: [fw5rw\\_lunwr@fws.gov](mailto:fw5rw_lunwr@fws.gov)

# Planning Newsletter

## Public Meetings

Attend one of our summer public meetings to hear a presentation on the refuge, ask any questions you may have, and provide comments for our planning process.

Tuesday, July 30, 6:30 pm  
Errol Town Hall  
Errol, NH

Thursday, August 1, 6:30 pm  
New Hampshire Community  
Technical College  
Berlin, NH

Friday, August 2, 6:30 pm  
Bethel Inn (Conference Center)  
Bethel, ME

We will also be arranging meetings in Augusta, ME and Concord, NH in late summer/early fall. Contact the refuge headquarters for additional information: (603) 482-3415.

## Who's Leading This Effort?

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, part of the Department of the Interior, is the principle federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing the nation's fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.

The Service also manages the National Wildlife Refuge System, the world's largest collection of lands set aside specifically for the protection of fish and wildlife populations and habitats. Refuges provide important habitats for native plants and animals, facilitating the preservation of threatened or endangered species. Refuges also offer a wide variety of wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, and many have visitor centers, interpretive trails, and environmental education programs.

resident wildlife, and rare plants. The refuge protects over 16,300 acres of wetland and forested upland habitat along Umbagog Lake and provides opportunities for recreational uses such as wildlife observation and photography, hunting, and fishing.

The lake itself is one of the largest along the New Hampshire/Maine border, covering more than 8,500 acres and stretching more than 10 miles in length. It has an average depth of only 15 feet. More than 50 miles of shoreline, many islands, and extensive wetlands all provide ideal habitat for many species of migratory birds. Common loons are a special attraction for some of the area's wildlife watchers.

The states of New Hampshire and Maine and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have all identified Umbagog Lake wetlands as a priority for protection. In 1979, the Secretary of the Interior designated part of these wetlands as a National Natural Landmark. This designation recognized the floating island bog wetlands as a significant natural area, one of a very special group of places illustrating the diversity of the country's natural history.

## Refuge Purpose

Unique among federal lands, national wildlife refuges are created with the singular mission to conserve, protect and, where appropriate, restore fish, wildlife and plant resources and their habitats. Congress established the Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge in 1992 for:

"...the conservation of the wetlands of the Nation in order to maintain the public benefits they provide and to help fulfill international obligations contained in various migratory bird treaties and conventions..."

– Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986

## Refuge Happenings

With acquisition of 8,300 acres in the past year, the refuge now protects over 16,300 acres under Service management. In addition, the State of New Hampshire has acquired more than 1,000 acres, and the State of Maine protects an additional 1,500 acres. This combination of ownerships and easements protects much of the Umbagog Lake shoreline and significant lengths of the Magalloway and upper Androscoggin rivers.

The refuge's current staff of five is joined by 4 summer interns, who will conduct wildlife and public use surveys as part of their duties, and a 7-person YCC team. The refuge will soon begin constructing a wildlife observation trail and platform along the Magalloway River.

The refuge will host a wildlife festival Saturday, August 3rd. Also consider stopping by for a "Take me Fishing on a National Wildlife Refuge" event on Saturday, August 17th. Call the refuge for additional information: (603) 482-3415.

# Issues Workbook



**Kayakers at Pulpit Rock.** *Photo by Tom Meredith.*

## Want to Get Involved?

Participation by you and other interested groups and individuals is critical to the success of this planning process. Only then can we develop effective management which reflects your interests.

The following Issues Workbook is one way to let the refuge hear your ideas. Please take the time to fill it in and send it back to us. In addition, the refuge is planning a series of public meetings in summer and early fall. These public meetings will be held in several towns near the refuge and in Augusta and Concord. Our intent is to hear directly from folks like you—to learn how you feel about the refuge, as well as your ideas for getting things done. We hope you can attend one of the public meetings (see preceding page for meeting dates and locations).

## Getting Involved...

The following workbook has been mailed to everyone on our mailing list and will also be handed out at our public meetings. It provides an effective way for us to share background information and to hear your ideas and concerns on important issues affecting the refuge. We have compiled a list of questions to provide a basis for comparing your comments with others we receive. Answer any or all that are important to you. Feel free to either add additional comments in the space provided, give us a call, email, or write us at the address provided.

The comments we receive in the workbooks and at the public meetings will help us identify issues and develop goals and objectives.

## Questions on Values, Vision, and the Service's Role

1. How many days do you visit Lake Umbagog refuge each year?

- 0 - 4
- 5 - 10
- 11 - 24
- 25 - 49
- 50+

2. What are your favorite activities to engage in while visiting the refuge?  
What areas of the refuge do you usually visit?

# Issues Workbook



**Paddlers on the Magalloway River.** Photo by Tom Meredith.

3. What do you value most about the upper Androscoggin River watershed (including Umbagog Lake)?

4. What do you consider to be the most important problem facing the upper Androscoggin River watershed?

5. Have you participated in any refuge-sponsored events or activities? If so, which ones?



**Duck Blinds.** Last year's Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) constructed six observation blinds for the refuge. USFWS photo.

6. What technical services would you like refuge staff to provide to your local community? (check if appropriate)

- wetlands management \_\_\_\_\_
- management of endangered species \_\_\_\_\_
- forest management \_\_\_\_\_
- management to benefit wildlife \_\_\_\_\_
- land protection funding \_\_\_\_\_
- control of invasive plant and animal species \_\_\_\_\_
- volunteer opportunities \_\_\_\_\_
- grants for habitat management \_\_\_\_\_

other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Did you attend one of our summer 2002 public meetings?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Location:

# Issues Workbook



A view across the lake. *USFWS photo.*

8. Where did you obtain this workbook? (This will help us determine the most effective places to distribute these in the future.)

## Questions on Recreation and Public Access

While fish, wildlife, and plant conservation is the refuge's primary purpose, some public uses can be allowed when they do not impact these resources. In fact, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 identifies six priority, wildlife-dependent public uses to receive enhanced consideration on national wildlife refuges: environmental education and interpretation, fishing, hunting, and wildlife observation and photography. These six uses will be evaluated in this planning process.

According to Service policy, only those public uses that are "compatible" with the purpose(s) for which a refuge was established are allowed. Compatibility with refuge purpose(s) is determined by the refuge manager, based on an evaluation of:

- anticipated impacts to natural resources
- whether safety among and between users can be maintained
- whether the refuge has the budget and staffing resources to administer the activity.

Lake Umbagog refuge has active programs for hunting, wildlife observation, and photography. Environmental education and interpretation activities are limited, given the small staff. The refuge is not formally open to fishing, however, it does provide boating access. This planning process will evaluate opportunities to expand each of these programs.



Fishing on Leonard Pond. *Photo by Tom Meredith.*

9. Are any of these activities, or current levels of use in general, a concern?

10. In your opinion, what other wildlife-related activities should occur on the refuge?

# Issues Workbook



Moose. USFWS photo.

11. Do our recreational facilities meet your needs? (trails, parking, boat ramp, signs, etc.) Please explain.

12. Please include here any additional comments on recreation, education, and public access.

## Questions on Natural Resource Conservation

The Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge provides excellent wildlife habitat for migratory birds, threatened species, resident fish and wildlife, and rare plant species. The glacial geology, northern climate and meandering and seasonally flooding Magalloway and Androscoggin rivers combine to create a unique and richly diverse environment. This plan will emphasize the need to conserve, protect, and enhance these habitats and the species dependent on them.

13. Are there other areas within the upper Androscoggin River watershed that, in your opinion, need protection? If so, please list them here, and explain why you think they are important.

14. Which options should the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pursue in protecting important habitats in the upper Androscoggin River watershed? (Please check up to 3 choices)

- land acquisition
- conservation easements
- purchasing development rights
- partnerships with private land owners
- work with conservation groups
- environmental education
- grants programs
- habitat restoration
- no active involvement
- other (please specify)

# Issues Workbook



**Wildlife surveys.** *This drift fence leading to a pitfall trap at Harper's Meadow helps refuge interns survey amphibian populations. USFWS photo.*

15. How do you feel about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acquiring land from willing sellers in the Umbagog Lake area?

16. In your opinion, which species or habitats should be a management priority?

17. Are any of the following natural resource issues a concern to you in the Umbagog Lake area? If so, please check your top three choices.

- the fragmentation of important habitats
- invasion of exotic plant and animal species
- overdevelopment of fragile habitats
- increased recreational use in sensitive habitat areas
- water quality
- lack of active management to improve wildlife habitats
- other issues (please specify)

18. If possible, please provide additional details on why you selected the above. In particular, we would be interested to know specific locations of concern.

19. Please include here any additional comments on conserving fish and wildlife habitat.

**Mail Issues Workbooks to:**

Nancy McGarigal, Refuge Planner  
300 Westgate Center Drive  
Hadley, MA 01035

**For Additional Information**

Contact the refuge:

Lake Umbagog NWR  
PO Box 240  
Errol, NH 03579

(603) 482-3415  
email: fw5rw\_lunwr@fws.gov

Also, view the webpage for this  
planning project for the latest  
updates and information:

<http://northeast.fws.gov/planning/umbagog.htm>

**That's it! Thank you for your time.**

**IMPORTANT:** Now that you are done, please separate pages 3 - 8 and mail them back to us by September 1, 2002. We will summarize the public comments in our next newsletter. Please help us keep our mailing list updated by completing the following.

If you wish to receive future "Planning Updates" about the Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge comprehensive conservation plan, please fill in the appropriate information below and return with the Issues Workbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Yes) Keep me on your mailing list/add me to your mailing list.

\_\_\_\_\_ (No) Take me off your mailing list.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are acting in an official capacity as the representative of an organization, please complete the following two items.

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that names on the CCP mailing list become part of the public record for this project. The Service must release names only, if requested, under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act of 1974. To retain you on our mailing list we need your permission. Please sign below.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_